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From the Office of the Director of Health

Time to Re-register Pit Bulls

This month the Springfield-Greene County Health Department will begin mailing a form to owners who registered their pit bull dogs last year. Owners of pit bull dogs who reside within Springfield city limits must annually re-register their dogs with the Springfield Animal Control Office in accordance with Council Bill No. 2006-113, which was passed April 17, 2006. Owners should verify or update the registration information included on the form and return it to the health department with a check or money order for \$50.00 for each pit bull they are re-registering. If a dog has been sold, information on the new owner must be provided to the health department. Pit bull owners who have not previously registered their dogs should call (417) 864-1126 to make a registration appointment.

The number of pit bulls and pit bull mixes picked up by animal control officers has declined from 2005 and 2006 (January through August), when 194 and 164 pit bulls were picked up respectively, compared to 141 pit bulls picked up during the same period in 2007.

"We believe the ordinance is performing as intended with a reduction in the number of pit bulls in the community and a corresponding reduction in the number of vicious dog complaints," says director of health Kevin Gipson. "Although we can't accurately determine the number of unregistered pit bulls still in the community, we believe the population has decreased."

Since enforcement of the ordinance began on October 16, 2006, approximately 400 pit bull dogs have been registered. To date 115 tickets have been issued for failure to register a pit bull.

"As we continue to decrease the population of unregistered pit bulls in Springfield, enforcement will become less demanding and crowding at the Animal Shelter should also be reduced," adds Gipson. "The health department has received numerous calls from citizens grateful for the removal or secure confinement of their neighbor's pit bull dogs, and very few complaints. We believe the ordinance is working to make our city safer."

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